

LANCER PERENNIAL PEA (Lathyrus latifolius)  
For Erosion Control and Wildlife Plantings  
In Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin

**Description:** Lancer perennial pea (Lathyrus latifolius) has been released by the Ecological Sciences Division of the Soil Conservation Service as an improved variety of perennial pea. Lancer is a long-lived, deep rooted perennial legume. Compared to other perennial peas, Lancer has more upright growth form and excellent seedling vigor. Lancer's long stems form a viny mat two to three feet high. The herbaceous stems die back each year. It's bloom period is four to six weeks long during the summer. The attractive flowers vary from white to deep purple and are borne on a raceme of four to ten flowers. The large seeds are contained in pods which shatter when fully ripe.

**Conservation Use:** Lancer perennial pea is well suited for inclusion in roadside seeding mixtures and in other critical area plantings where the objective includes beautification. Lancer is compatible with both grasses and other legumes. It also has value for wildlife food and cover and is known to be eaten by pheasant and quail.



**Site:** Lancer perennial pea grows on most soils with fair to good drainage. It does best on permeable, fertile, well-limed soils. Quite satisfactory growth is made on light soils. It is not suited to wet soils with poor internal drainage and is difficult to establish on sands.

**Planting Method:** For inclusion in roadside seeding mixtures or other critical area plantings seed in early spring or in the fall no later than September 15th. If slopes are too steep to get on with equipment, broadcast fertilizer and seed, either by hand or with a hydroseeder. On gentle slopes planting in rows rather than solid seedings is suggested. This may be accomplished with a drill set to seed 15 pounds of seed per acre and plugging two of every three openings. Place the seed  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 1 inch deep in a firm seedbed. The seed is large and needs to be covered or firmly pressed into the soil. All plantings must be mulched with straw at the rate of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 tons per acre or 100 pounds per 1,000 square feet.

For wildlife plantings, row seedings using 20 pounds per acre, seeding 10 seeds per linear foot is ample. Where possible roll or cultipack before and after seeding.

**Lime and Fertilizer:** Apply lime, phosphate and potash as recommended for other legumes, such as alfalfa.

**Inoculation:** Inoculate seed with fresh inoculant just before seeding. Use a slurry of water and peat-based inoculant. Directions and expiration date are given on the inoculant package. If a hydroseeder is used, add inoculant to the mixture at 4 times recommended rate.



Rate of Seeding: There are approximately 8,000 seeds per pound. A seeding rate of 15 pounds per acre is suggested in mixtures for roadbanks and other critical areas. A rate of 20 pounds per acre is adequate for wildlife plantings. In row seedings 10 seeds per linear foot is ample.

Date of Seeding: Plant as early in the spring as possible, or in the fall no later than mid-September.

Management: During the establishment year, on sites where equipment can be used, it helps to mow heavy weed growth once or twice during the summer to reduce competition. Lancer perennial pea is susceptible to 2,4-D and similar spray.

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